

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Non-Final Office Action mailed on May 12, 2009. Claims 23 to 31 are pending in this application. Claims 1 to 23 stand previously cancelled. Applicant has amended Claims 23, 27, and 29. Applicant has added new Claims 32 to 37. No new matter is added by these amendments and these new claims. The Director is authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-1818. If such a withdrawal or credit is made, please indicate the Attorney Docket No. 0112857-00590 on the account statement.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §103

The Office Action rejected Claims 23 to 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,978,560 to Tan et al. ("Tan"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,728,905 to Gnanasivam et al. ("Gnanasivam"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,031,089 to Liu et al. ("Liu"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,314,447 to Lea et al. ("Lea"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with, and traverses, these rejections. Nevertheless, Applicant has amended certain of the claims to advance prosecution of this application.

Amended independent Claim 23 recites, in part: "capability exchange means for collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses and creating an apparatus information table by transmitting software cells to all the other information processing apparatuses on the network, wherein the apparatus information table includes apparatus data associated with all the other information processing apparatuses when the information processing apparatus is in a master status and wherein the apparatus information table includes identifications associated with all the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with all the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status . . . wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated upon powering on of said information processing apparatus." These amendments are supported at least in paragraph [0084] of the Specification, which states, in part: "[w]hen a power is turned on, the information processing apparatus ID is generated by the main processor 21 included in the information processing controller in the information

processing apparatus, based on date and time of turning the power on, the number of the sub-processors 23 included in the information processing controller in the information processing apparatus, the network address of the information processing apparatus, etc.”

Applicant respectfully submits that Tan, Gnanasivam, Liu, and Lea, alone or in combination, do not disclose or render obvious an information processing apparatus which includes capability exchange means, wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated upon powering on of said information processing apparatus. Specifically, these references do not disclose an information processing apparatus which includes capability exchange means for collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses and creating an apparatus information table by transmitting software cells to all the other information processing apparatuses on the network, wherein the apparatus information table includes apparatus data associated with all the other information processing apparatuses when the information processing apparatus is in a master status and wherein the apparatus information table includes identifications associated with all the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with all the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status, wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated upon powering on of said information processing apparatus.

Although certain of the cited references may disclose information processing apparatus identification information associated with various networked information processing apparatuses, these references are silent as to generating the identification information upon powering on of the various information processing apparatuses. Therefore, unlike the information processing apparatus of amended independent Claim 23, Tan, Gnanasivam, Liu, and Lea, alone or in combination, do not disclose or render obvious an information processing apparatus which includes capability exchange means for collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses and creating an apparatus information table by transmitting software cells to all the other information processing apparatuses on the network, wherein the apparatus information table includes apparatus data associated with all the other information processing apparatuses when the information processing

apparatus is in a master status and wherein the apparatus information table includes identifications associated with all the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with all the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status, wherein the apparatus data includes information processing apparatus identification information which is generated upon powering on of said information processing apparatus. Moreover, it would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify these references to arrive at such an information processing apparatus without reasonably being construed as impermissible hindsight reconstruction.

For at least these reasons, amended independent Claim 23 is patently distinguished over the cited references, and is in condition for allowance. Claims 24 and 25 depend directly from amended independent Claim 23, and are allowable for similar reasons, and because of the additional features recited in these claims.

Amended independent Claims 26 and 29 have been amended to include similar features as amended independent Claim 23, and are allowable for similar reasons. Claims 27 and 28, and Claims 30 and 31 depend directly from amended Claims 26 and 29, respectively, and are allowable for similar reasons, and because of the additional features recited in these claims.

New Claims

Applicant has added new Claims 32 to 37. New claims 32 and 33 depend directly from amended independent Claim 23. New Claim 32 is directed to an information processing apparatus wherein information processing apparatus identification information of the information processing apparatus is generated by the information processing apparatus based at least in part on one or more of: (i) a date; and (ii) a time, of powering on of the information processing apparatus. This new claim is supported at least in paragraph [0084] of the Specification which states, in part: “[w]hen a power is turned on, the information processing apparatus ID is generated by the main processor 21 included in the information processing controller in the information processing apparatus, based on date and time of turning the power on, the number of the sub-processors 23 included in the information processing controller in the

information processing apparatus, the network address of the information processing apparatus, etc.”

New Claim 33 is directed to an information processing apparatus wherein, upon disconnection from the network of an information processing apparatus in a master status, at least one of the other information processing apparatuses in a slave status changes to a master status based, at least in part, on a comparison of the information processing apparatus identification information of said information processing apparatus which changes status and the information processing apparatus identification information of all the other information processing apparatuses. These amendments are supported at least in paragraph [0146] of the Specification which states, in part: “each of the information processing apparatuses which are not disconnected from the network 9 replaces the information processing apparatus ID's of its own apparatus and other apparatuses by values, and compare the information processing apparatus ID of its own apparatus with the information processing apparatus ID's of other apparatuses . . . [i]f the information processing apparatus ID of its own apparatus is the minimum among the information processing apparatuses which are not disconnected from the network 9, the slave apparatus turns into a master apparatus, sets the MS status to ‘0’.”

For at least the reasons given above with respect to amended independent Claim 23, and because of the additional features recited in new Claims 32 and 33, these claims are patentably distinguished over the cited references and are in condition for allowance.

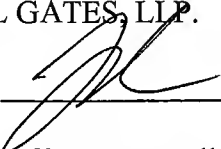
Claims 34 and 35, and Claims 36 and 37 depend directly from amended independent Claims 26 and 29, respectively, and are allowable for similar reasons as given above with respect to Claims 26 and 29, and because of the additional features recited in these new Claims.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

K&L GATES, LLP.

BY



Jeffrey M. Ingalls
Reg. No. 58,078
Customer No. 29175

Dated: August 18, 2009